America
    my almost country
    tis of thee
    I might have sung.

"We are not Canadians,
we are British North Americans,"
my New Brunswick anti-confederation uncle said.
"Maybe we should secede
and go back where we belong."

Only who belongs there
any more?

In Cambridge I lived on Tory Row
and was at home and homesick.
"Why didn't you Canadians
come in with us?"
    my room mate once asked me.
"But we weren't Canadians then,"
    I said,
"We were you.
Why did you leave?"

When I think of America
I think of the other Americans
George the Third's persistent subjects
buried in loyalist graveyards.
How many of them died
their first cold starving stubborn winter
away from home?
A Revolution is a civil war.
America is a land of civil war. 
Also it is (or was) Utopia.

I did not choose Utopia. 
Therefore I did not choose you.

I chose instead 
non-perfectibility, the non-ideal, 
and this non-country for which I half apologize. 
(My roots are in a province 
where people say 
"I am going to Canada"
and I live in another 
where people blame the East for hail and duststorms.)

I did not choose you 
and yet, America, I am torn 
I love 
I grieve for you

my dear my feared 
my nearly 
native land.